

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 06197 01 OF 02 161809Z

46

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 SAJ-01 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 SP-02

STR-04 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 L-02 PRS-01

PA-01 USIA-06 TAR-01 /072 W
----- 040755

R 161751Z APR 75
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9454
INFO USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USDEL MTN GENEVA
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USMISSION USBERLIN
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
AMCONSUL MUNICH

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 06197

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EIND, ETRD, GW
SUBJECT: STANDARDS HARMONIZATION: OPTIMUM
METRIC STANDARDS

REF: BONN 4580, STATE 72517

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. METRIC FASTENERS QUESTION HAS ONCE MORE BEEN
DRAMATIZED BY THE SPIEGEL. IN AN ARTICLE ENTITLED
"ON THE QUIET" (UNTERDERHAND), APRIL 14 ISSUE
DESCRIBED RECENT EUROPEAN EFFORTS TO PREVENT INTRODUC-
TION OF OMFS AND USG REACTION TO EC PROTESTS.

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PAGE 02 BONN 06197 01 OF 02 161809Z

EXTRACTS FROM THIS ARTICLE FOLLOW:

"IN ORDER TO SPARE EXPORT INDUSTRY FROM DAMAGES IN MILLIONS, WEST GERMAN SCREW PRODUCERS WANT TO PREVENT ADOPTION OF A NEW AMERICAN SYSTEM OF STANDARDS.

"WHEN FRACTIONS OF MILLIMETERS WERE AT STAKE, EUROPEANS WERE OF ONE OPINION LIKE SELDOM BEFORE. LARGE CONCERNS AND FAMILY ENTERPRISES, EC COMMISSIONERS AND PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM ALL EC COUNTRIES GOT TOGETHER TO WARD OFF THE ATTACK OF AMERICAN MULTIS ON THE LIBERALITY OF WORLD TRADE. WITH PETITIONS AND PROTESTS THEY DEFENDED THEMSELVES AGAINST THE NEW STANDARDS FOR SCREWS PROMOTED BY THE US AUTOMOBILE GIANTS GENERAL MOTORS AND FORD. THEY PROPHESED THAT THE US MEASUREMENTS SYSTEM WOULD LEAD TO A TRADE WAR WHICH WOULD SHARPEN WORLD-WIDE PROBLEMS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT...

"IN 1971, AS THE MANAGER OF THE TECHNICAL ASSOCIATION FOR SCREWS AND STANDARDIZED PARTS, ERHARD PETERS, RECALLS, "THE ALARM BELLS RANG IN EUROPE." FOR, INSTEAD OF RELYING ON ISO STANDARDS, THE AMERICANS CREATED A NEW FORM, THE "OPTIMUM METRIC FASTENERS SYSTEM" (OMFS). THEIR BOLTS WERE TO HAVE A THICKER CORE, BUT THEY HAD TO GET ALONG WITH A MORE SHALLOW DEPTH OF THE THREAD.

"THE MOTIVE OF AMERICAN CREATORS OF STANDARDS IS THE FEAR OF A COMPETITIVE ADVANCE BY THE EUROPEANS AND THE JAPANESE: THE COSTS FOR CONVERSION TO ISO STANDARDS--ALREADY COPE WITH BY OTHER COMPETITORS-- WOULD NOW RAISE THE PRICES ONLY OF US GOODS.

"THE US MODELS OFFERED HARDLY ANY TECHNICAL ADVANTAGES: THEY WERE EQUAL TO EUROPEAN STANDARDS--E.G., IN THEIR HOLDING CAPACITY. HOWEVER, THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES WOULD BE ALL-THE-MORE INCISIVE.

"IN FACT, THE STRATEGISTS FROM DETROIT TOYED WITH LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES WHICH WOULD SEVERELY STRIKE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 BONN 06197 01 OF 02 161809Z

EUROPEAN AUTOMOBILE PRODUCERS. IF--AS INTENDED-- ONLY PASSENGER CARS COULD BE SOLD IN AMERICA WHICH ARE BOLTED TOGETHER UNDER OMFS STANDARDS, THEN THE FOUR LARGEST WEST GERMAN AUTOMOBILE PRODUCERS ALONE WOULD HAVE TO MAKE ADDITIONAL INVESTMENTS OF ABOUT DM 150 MILLION ANNUALLY OVER THE NEXT DECADE.

" BEYOND THIS, THE AUTOMOBILE PRODUCERS FEARED

FOR THE SAFETY OF THEIR US EXPORTS. INASMUCH AS
SCREWS BASED ON US AND ISO STANDARDS CAN HARDLY BE
DISTINGUISHED FROM EACH OTHER, AMERICAN NUTS COULD
BE FORCED ON GERMAN BOLTS. THE CONSEQUENCE: THE
THREADS WILL BE DESTROYED. 'THERE IS A JAM IN THE
SIXTH GEAR', THIS IS HOW HELMUT REIHLEN, ASSISTANT
MANAGER OF THE GERMAN COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS, DESCRIBES
THE TIGHTENING OF A US-METRIC WHEEL-NUT ON A
VOLKSWAGEN BUILT UNDER GERMAN STANDARDS, 'AND THEN
YOU'LL LOSE THE WHEEL AFTER 50 KILOMETERS'.

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PAGE 01 BONN 06197 02 OF 02 161808Z

46

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COME-00 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 SP-02 STR-04

TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 SAJ-01 L-02 PRS-01

PA-01 USIA-06 TAR-01 /072 W
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R 161751Z APR 75
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9455
INFO USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 06197

"TO TACK AGAINST THE 'POLICY OF STANDARDS WITH THE GUNBOAT' (ACCORDING TO REIHLEN), INDUSTRIALISTS MOBILIZED BUNDESTAG DEPUTIES AND THEIR FRIENDS IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. STATE SECRETARY MARTIN GRUENER (FDP) FROM THE ECONOMICS MINISTRY ALERTED DEFENSE MINISTER GEORGE LEBER WHO SAID THAT THE NATO ARMY WAS ONLY PARTIALLY OPERATIONAL IF A THIRD TYPE OF SCREWS WOULD COME INTO THE DEPOTS.

"AND WHEN THE EC COMMISSION FORMALLY PROTESTED IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 BONN 06197 02 OF 02 161808Z

WASHINGTON, THE US GOVERNMENT REPLIED IN AN INDIFFERENT WAY THAT IT HAD NO INTENTION FOR THE TIME BEING OF SUPPORTING THEIR CONCERNS IN THE WAR ON STANDARDS. THE MANAGERS OF INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS NOTED WITH INTEREST THAT OTHER BRANCHES (OF US INDUSTRY) DID NOT GO ALONG WITH THE US AUTO CONCERNS BUT CONTINUED THEIR INTEREST IN ISO STANDARDS.

"THE NEW PEACE SIGNS FROM OVERSEAS GAVE NEW COURAGE TO THE GERMAN SCREW OFFICIALS. PETERS HOPES: 'OMFS CAN YET BE GOTTEN OFF THE ICE'. AT THE SHOW-DOWN BETWEEN AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN SCREW PRODUCERS TO TAKE PLACE IN BUDAPEST LATE IN APRIL, THE GERMANS WANT TO BE TOUGH IN THE MATTER BUT CAUTIOUS IN THE TONE. ARTHUR STRECKER, IN CHARGE OF THE DESK ON STANDARDS IN THE BONN ECONOMICS MINISTRY, SAYS: 'THIS MUST BE ACCOMPLISHED SOMEWHAT ON THE QUIET'." END UNCLASSIFIED

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2. COMMENT: EARLY IN APRIL WE CONVEYED SUBSTANCE OF PARAS 6 AND 7 OF STATE 72517 TO KUEHN AND STRECKER IN ECONMIN. KUEHN TOLD US THAT THIS INFORMATION CONFIRMED HIS OWN BELIEF THAT A COMPROMISE CAN BE FOUND. HE WARNED THAT OTHER FRG OFFICIALS INCLUDING ASSTSEC STEEG HAD AT FIRST BEEN INCLINED TO TAKE A HARDER STANCE AND TO LIST OMFS AS AN NTM IN GATT, BUT THAT THEY TOO WERE MORE HOPEFUL NOW ABOUT CHANCES OF FINDING COMPROMISE. WE PLAN TO GET NEW READING ON STATE OF PLAY FROM DR. THURNAU FOLLOWING APRIL 17-18 ISO TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING IN MUNICH.
HILLENBRAND

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